

**State of Colorado
Department of Human Services**

~ Statewide Strategic Use Fund ~

**Request for Applications (RFA)
Guidelines and Instructions**

**Due: March 19, 2010
4:00 p.m.**

**Colorado Dept. of Human Services
Statewide Strategic Use Fund
Colorado Works Division
1575 Sherman Street, 3rd Floor
Denver, CO 80203
www.colorado.gov/coloradoworks**

**Colorado Dept. of Human Services
Statewide Strategic Use Fund (SSUF)**

**~ Applicant Checklist ~
Information Required in SSUF Applications**

The following information contains a condensed list of all the sections and corresponding attachments that must be submitted in your grant application packet. You may want to use this as an “applicant checklist” when preparing your application materials to ensure that all directions have been followed and every required attachment is included.

We recommend that applicants read the entire Request for Application (RFA) before beginning to fill out the information, as further instructions for each section are stated in the RFA itself. Please be advised that both Section II and the Budget Form in Section IV must be completed on the forms provided. Your grant application packet must be submitted in the specific order specified in this RFA. Failure to follow directions may result in disqualification, so please review all application instructions carefully.

Section I: Cover Letter (one page)

Applications must include a one-page cover letter on agency letterhead that provides the specific information requested by the RFA.

Section II: Application Form

The attached Application Form should be filled out in Microsoft Word, printed, and attached to the application packet.

Section III: Project Narrative (100 points total)

All applications must include a Project Narrative that addresses each topic in the RFA. The narrative is strictly limited to eight (8) single-spaced, typewritten pages in a twelve (12)-point font with one (1) inch margins (endnotes and references excluded). Each topic must be addressed in which it appears in the RFA, labeled with the appropriate topic heading.

Section IV: Logic Model

Applications must include a logic model for the proposed SSUF project. Please refer to Appendices B and D for more information about logic models and program evaluation. Points assigned to the logic model are embedded in the Project Narrative. The logic model does not count in the eight-page limit.

Section V: Budget and Budget Narrative (25 points total)

All applications must include the attached Budget Form and a detailed Budget Narrative document. The Budget and Budget Narrative do not count in the eight-page limit.

Section VI: Required Attachments

Applications must include a set of required attachments, labeled with the corresponding number presented here and in the RFA. In cases of a multi-agency or collaborative application, the

attachments must be submitted by the lead agency that will act as the fiscal agent for the grant.

Financial Attachments

1. Current operating budget
2. Current (year-to-date) financial statements
3. Most recent year-end financial statement and audit management or opinion letter

Other Attachments

4. Federal tax-exempt certificate, if applicable
5. Colorado Insurance Requirement compliance certificate. For further information, please see Appendix E.
6. Anti-discrimination statement
7. Qualifications of key staff who will be working on this initiative
8. Any relevant evaluation results (optional)
9. Annual report (optional)
10. A maximum of four (4) letters of support that provide evidence of collaboration, community support, and cooperation per the SSUF goals and activities.

Copies:

All applicants must submit one (1) original and five (5) copies of the entire grant packet.

Electronic Files:

Applicants must submit a flash/jump/travel drive that contains the following electronic files:

- Application Form (Microsoft Word Document)
- Project Narrative (Microsoft Word Document)
- Logic Model (Microsoft Word or Excel Document)
- Budget (Microsoft Excel Document)
- Budget Narrative (Microsoft Word Document)

**Colorado Dept. of Human Services
~ Statewide Strategic Use Fund ~**

**Request for Applications (RFA)
Application Guidelines**

Background

The Statewide Strategic Use Fund (SSUF) was created by the Colorado General Assembly via SB08-177. Funds are from an appropriation of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds.

The SSUF is intended to be a state-level mechanism through which attention can be paid to serving Colorado's low-income populations and addressing various community and capacity building needs in order to better serve needy families. Statute (CRS 26-2-721.7) defines the broad goals to be achieved through the allocation of funds. A key factor highlighted in statute is the strategic nature of the SSUF: it is intended to be a tool that leads to positive outcomes on a broader level (in terms of both populations served and areas impacted) and across a sustained period of time. It is not intended to be a fund for plugging programmatic holes or filling budget shortfalls.

Priority consideration will be given to systemic projects that have a statewide or regional impact and cannot effectively be accomplished with existing funds. (Projects that will serve only one county must demonstrate the impact of services throughout the county.) Geographic representation will also be considered. Competitive projects will address systemic issues that mitigate poverty and its impact on families and communities, use a collaborative model in delivering services, and have a strong evidence basis.

Applicant Types and Eligible Entities

Organizations eligible to apply for funding are identified in statute (C.R.S. Section 26-2-721.7(c)) are strictly limited to:

- County departments;
- Nonprofit or not-for-profit entities;
- State agencies.

Eligible entities may choose to apply either singly or jointly with one or more eligible entities. Projects that demonstrate strong collaboration will be prioritized. Applicants must demonstrate capacity in providing services under at least one of the four purposes of TANF and/or experience serving TANF-eligible individuals/families.

Available Funding

SSUF funding is contingent upon an annual legislative appropriation. The Department of Human Services has requested \$10 million for state fiscal year 2010-11; however, until the

Governor signs the Long Bill (i.e. the budget), this could change. Due to the time required for grant selection and contracting, the application process is moving forward under the assumption that funds will be available. It is anticipated that funded projects will begin work in July 2010, and will end on June 30, 2012. **Thus, funding for this grant period will be for a two-year period, approximately from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2012.** Additional funds may be appropriated in future years, pending action by the Colorado General Assembly.

Grant amounts for this award period will be between **\$25,000** and **\$1,000,000**, with no single grant to exceed this cap.

Conditions of Funding

Proposed projects must clearly meet at least one of the four purposes of TANF as well as one or more of the statutorily defined goals for the SSUF.

TANF Purpose:

Projects funded through the SSUF are required to meet at least one of the purposes of the Colorado Works Program, as specified in CRS 26-2-705:

1. Assisting needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes
2. Reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage
3. Preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies
4. Encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

SSUF Goals:

Projects funded through the SSUF must demonstrate effectiveness in achieving, or represent an evidence-based, innovative approach that is likely to achieve, one or more of the following goals as outlined in CRS 26-2-721.7:

1. Enhancing the long-term self-sufficiency of eligible, low-income Colorado families;
2. Reducing the number of children and families living in poverty;
3. Strengthening families who are living in poverty; or
4. Increasing the participation of Colorado Works participants in meaningful work activities.

Outcomes and Evaluation

A logic model must be submitted for each proposed SSUF project. (An agency logic model will not be accepted, unless the agency implements only the project requesting SSUF funds.) Logic models are great tools to show how outcomes are related to a project's activities and related outputs. See Appendices B and D for a tutorial and more information about logic models.

Additionally, the SSUF program intends to require all grantees to participate in an external program evaluation, based on 14 outcomes that have been identified, in literature, as a direct result of projects that meet the goals of the SSUF and purposes of TANF. See Appendix D for a full presentation of the 14 outcomes and more information about program evaluation.

Application Logistics

Application Submission:

The deadline for receipt of all applications is **Friday, March 19, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.** Applications that do not arrive by the exact deadline will not be considered, without exception. Please note that any package mailed via the U.S. Postal System must be routed through a central distribution site before reaching our office – plan extra time if using the U.S. Postal System, including Express Mail. E-mail, fax, incomplete, or late applications will automatically be disqualified.

Mail or Deliver Applications to:

Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Colorado Works
Attention: Samantha O'Neill-Dunbar
1575 Sherman Street, 3rd Floor
Denver, Colorado 80203

Submit one (1) original and five (5) copies of your complete application. Additionally, applicants are required to submit a flash drive containing the required application material.

Applications must be binder clipped, and include each section of information as required by this RFA. Grant packets with paper clips, rubber bands, and/or staples will not be accepted, nor will applications submitted in folders or three-ring binders. Additionally, no pictures, brochures, or appendices other than the required attachments will be considered.

Applicant Assistance

Following is information regarding the two ways in which applicants may obtain assistance with the grant rules and process:

Question and Answer Period:

In order to answer questions and/or offer additional assistance in understanding TANF, the SSUF program, and the application process, **Colorado Works staff will be available by e-mail between February 9 and March 16, 2010.** All questions must be posed electronically. Every question asked during this period will be posted on the Colorado Works website at www.colorado.gov/coloradoworks to be available to all potential applicants to read. Please refer to this website prior to contacting staff, as your question may have already been answered.

Contacts:

Samantha O'Neill-Dunbar
samantha.oneilldunbar@state.co.us

Cherylynn Foster-Gerton
cherylynn.fostergerton@state.co.us

Technical Assistance Forum:

A technical assistance forum regarding TANF, the SSUF funds, and this RFA is scheduled for February 18, 2010. This forum is intended to answer any questions that potential applicants have regarding the application and funding process, and to assist agencies in developing their project proposals. All potential applicants are invited to attend, either in person or via teleconference. Logistical details and a registration form will be posted on the Colorado Works website at

www.colorado.gov/coloradoworks. Participation in the forum is strongly encouraged – however, it is not required.

Application Timeline

Announcement of Funding and Application Release	February 8, 2010
Period for Applicant Questions	February 9-March 16, 2010
Applicant Technical Assistance Forum	February 18, 2010
Application Due Date	March 19, 2010 - 4:00 P.M.
Staff Review	March 22-26, 2010
Selection Committee Review	April 6-7, 2010
Funding Recommendations to CDHS Executive Director	By April 16, 2010
Award Announcements	May 7, 2010
Contract Execution	May-June 2010
Funding Cycle Begins	July 1, 2010

Grantee Requirements

Contracts and Reimbursements:

Agencies that receive SSUF grant funds will enter into a contract with the State of Colorado. All grants are funded on a cost reimbursable basis. To be reimbursed for expenses, grantee agencies will submit an SSUF invoice to the state for eligible grant expenses incurred in the previous month(s). Checks for approved expenses will be mailed or electronically deposited approximately two weeks following receipt of the grantee's invoice.

Orientation Meeting:

All SSUF grant recipients will be required to attend a one-day Orientation Meeting in Denver. Agencies should include sufficient funds in their proposed budgets to allow for at least one key employee working on the SSUF project to attend this meeting. Details about the Orientation will be announced once award notifications are made.

Reporting:

All grantees will be required to submit quarterly progress reports, as well as a project-end report. Details regarding these reporting requirements will be shared at the Orientation Meeting mentioned above.

Notification of Open Records Act:

All material submitted per this grant application becomes the property of the State of Colorado and is subject to the terms of Colorado Revised Statutes 24-72-201-206, Public (open) Records. The State of Colorado has the right to use any or all information/material presented in the grant application, subject to limitations for proprietary or confidential information. Disqualification or denial of the application does not eliminate this right. Any additional restrictions on the use or inspection of material contained within the proposal shall be clearly stated in the proposal itself. The contents of the application will become contractual obligations if the project is funded.

**Colorado Dept. of Human Services
Statewide Strategic Use Fund**

Request for Applications (RFA)

Anticipated Funding Cycle:

July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2012

Applicants: Please read this Request for Application (RFA), including the appendices, in its entirety before you begin writing your application. Failure to follow directions may result in disqualification, so be sure to review all application instructions carefully.

When filling out the application, please be aware that Sections II and the Budget Form in Section V must be completed on the forms provided. Attach all required information (Sections I through VI) in the grant packets in the exact order specified in this RFA.

All application materials, including instructions, are available for download at www.colorado.gov/coloradoworks (Unfortunately, our website does not allow Excel documents to be downloaded – please contact the Colorado Works staff (p. 6) for a blank copy of the Budget form if you need that.)

Section I: Cover Letter

All applications must include a one-page cover letter on agency letterhead that includes:

- Overview of the proposed project;
- Total dollars requested for the two-year project period;
- Name of the organization/person with financial or fiscal responsibility for this project;
- Signed by the agency's Executive Director (in the case of collaborative or multi-agency projects, the executive director of the lead agency should sign the letter.)

Section II: Application Form

All applications must include the attached Application Form. This form should be filled out in Microsoft Word, printed, and attached to the application packet.

Section III: Project Narrative (100 points total)

The Project Narrative is limited to eight (8) single-spaced, typewritten pages in a twelve (12)-point font with one (1) inch margins (endnotes and references excluded). Each topic must be addressed in the order in which it appears in this RFA, labeled with the appropriate topic heading. However, you do not need to restate the embedded questions per topic. Number all pages, preferably in the footer of the document. Please note that the Logic Model required in sub-section C does not count in the eight-page limit. Failure to follow directions may result in disqualification, so please be sure that your Project Narrative complies with these instructions.

A. STATEMENT OF NEED (10 points)

- Clearly describe the problem that your project proposes to address. Include reputable data, statistics, and/or other information that supports the need for this type of initiative in the area(s) where services will be provided. **(5 points)**
- Describe the target population to be served by this project, including information about how they experience the issue/need detailed above. **(5 points)**

B. ACTIVITIES / SERVICES (20 points)

- Explain how the project/initiative that is being proposed truly meets the goal of this grant to provide innovative and/or inventive new approaches to assisting those in need **(5 points)**
- Clearly describe the project's proposed goals and activities, including:
 - detailed information regarding the actual services to be provided;
 - how those services will result in measurable outcomes, as described in sub-section C and your logic model;
 - how clients will obtain the services to be offered, including detailed explanations of how new customers will be recruited and/or how TANF-eligible families will be referred for services. **(10 points)**
- What is the project's proposed service delivery timeline – i.e. the sequence of services to be provided, including detailed information about planning and development phases, specific start and end dates, and ongoing and/or intermittent activities. **(5 points)**

C. OUTCOMES / EVALUATION (20 points)

- Please submit a Logic Model for the proposed project for which you are seeking SSUF grant funds; label and attach your logic model as Section IV of the application packet. See Appendices B and D for a tutorial and more information regarding logic models and outcomes-based evaluation; see Appendix C for a template to use in presenting your logic model. (We recommend that you use this template; if you choose not to use it, be sure that your headings match those on this template.) If your program is a good fit for a SSUF grant, the goals and outcomes in your logic model should align with the goals and outcomes in the SSUF Logic Model in Appendix A. **(14 points)**
- Describe the agency's prior evaluation experience, including evaluation methods used to collect and process output data and outcome measurements. **(6 points)**

D. EVIDENCE BASIS (15 points)

- Clearly explain how the proposed project is evidence-based. For purposes of the SSUF, reviewers will consider four tiers of evidence basis: 1) based on a nationally accredited program using established curricula; 2) based on evaluation results and historical data from an agency's practice; 3) has the potential for success based on proven research; or 4) is an innovative idea, based on proven theories, but not backed by any research. **(5 points)**
- Explain how evidence shows how the proposed services and activities will result in intended outcomes. **(10 points)**

E. AGENCY CAPACITY (10 points)

- Provide a brief program history, including information about the length of time the agency has been providing services similar to those being proposed for this initiative. If these services have changed within the past 24 months, please explain that shift, as well. **(3 points)**
- Describe pertinent experience in working with TANF-eligible families/individuals. **(3 points)**
- Clearly explain how you will ensure that funds awarded through this grant will be used only for services that meet one or more of the purposes of TANF and that support TANF-eligible families/individuals. **(4 points)**

F. COLLABORATION (15 points)

- Briefly describe effective collaborations in which your agency is actively involved in service delivery activities. Consider active collaborations with agencies such as employers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, government entities, health care facilities, and/or other entities. **(3 points)**
- Clearly describe the collaborations that will be directly involved in the proposed project. Please indicate if the collaborations are new, expanded, or existing. Explain how these partnerships will be of direct benefit both to the agencies involved and to the clients served through this project – e.g. through consolidated services, coordinated efforts, and/or shared resources. **(10 points)**
- Demonstrated cooperation and collaboration can be further substantiated by letters of support from appropriate entities. Letters should clearly describe the specific working relationship, in terms of intended SSUF services, between the applicant and the entity providing the letter. Applicants may submit a maximum of four (4) letters, presented as Attachment 10. **(2 points)**

G. SUSTAINABILITY (10 points)

- Clearly describe how the project will be sustained once these grant funds are no longer available. If the proposed project is intended as a short-term solution that will become obsolete once the initiative's results are achieved, please explain why the project will not be necessary in the long-term. **(6 points)**
- Explain how the agency will leverage available resources from its partners in order to maximize awarded funds and ensure that project will be supported and sustained in the future. **(4 points)**

Section IV: Logic Model

Applications must include a Logic Model for the proposed SSUF project. Please refer to Appendices B and D for more information about logic models. Appendix C contains a template you may use in presenting your logic model. The Logic Model is worth 12 points, as described in sub-section C of the Project Narrative. It does not count in the narrative's eight-page limit.

Section V: Budget and Budget Narrative (25 points total)

All applications must include a Budget and a detailed Budget Narrative, labeled accordingly. Please note that the Budget Form is a Microsoft Excel document. The Budget and Budget Narrative do not count in the eight-pages delimited in Section III.

Budget (15 points)

Complete the Budget Form in Microsoft Excel. Within each category, list all anticipated areas of grant-funded expenditures (e.g. salaries, stipends, supplies.) If necessary, you may add additional rows, but be careful not to corrupt any of the form's embedded formulas. Applicants are strongly encouraged to show a minimum 20% match to demonstrate support and that the proposed project is not fully reliant on SSUF funding. For example, match funds may be used to serve needy participants who are not TANF eligible or pay for some/all of certain direct project expenses. Match funds can come from a variety of sources, including cash, government funds, grants, in-kind contributions, and/or other private funds. All in-kind contributions are to be valued at their full dollar amount. Additionally, please note that indirect costs are limited to 15%.

Budget Narrative (10 points)

The Budget Narrative should be attached to the grant packet, directly following the Budget form. In the Budget Narrative, please explain how the requested funds in each budget line will be used to support the project's proposed activities, services, and outcomes. Please include as much information as possible to ensure that the Selection Committee understands the purpose of each line item, and how the related cost estimate was derived. Be sure to explain how your Indirect rate was derived. Additionally, please describe the in-kind contributions that are being counted towards the initiative's total cost.

Section VI: Required Attachments

Applications must include all required attachments. Please label each attachment with the corresponding number. If any of the requested attachments are not available, provide a clearly numbered sheet that explains the omission.

Financial Attachments

1. The current operating budget for the applicant (or lead agency)
2. Current (year-to-date) financial statements for the applicant (or lead agency)
3. Year-end financial statement and audit management or opinion letter for the applicant (or lead agency)

Other Attachments

4. Applicant's (or lead agency's) federal tax-exempt certificate
5. Applicant's (or lead agency's) Colorado Insurance Requirement compliance certificate. For more information, see Appendix E.
6. Applicant's (or lead agency's) anti-discrimination statement
7. Contact information and qualifications of any key staff who will be working on this initiative

8. Any relevant evaluation results (optional)
9. Applicant's (or lead agency's) annual report (optional)
10. A maximum of four (4) letters of support that provide evidence of collaboration, community support and cooperation from organizations with whom you will collaborate in the development and delivery of grant services. These letters are limited to one page, each, and must be printed on agency letterhead and contain an original signature. Each letter should clearly explain the relationship between the applicant and the entity providing the letter of support.